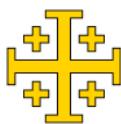


LUKE 21:25

**THERE WILL
BE SIGNS
IN THE SUN,
THE MOON,
AND THE STARS**



Jerusalem Evangelical Lutheran Church

The Reverend Bonnie M. Oplinger, *Pastor*
Mr. Roger L. Kurtz, *Director of Music*

“As followers of Jesus, we serve our neighbors locally and globally.”

First Sunday of Advent

November 28, 2021

9:00 a.m.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRELUDE: *Savior of the Nations, Come* - Dietrich Buxtehude

OPENING ACCLAMATION & VERSICLES

The congregation stands at the direction of the pastor. Throughout this worship folder, the text in bold type is said by the congregation. All may make the sign of the cross as the presiding minister begins:

Blessed be God: Father, + Son, and Holy Spirit.

And blessed be his kingdom, now and forever. Amen

The following is said as the candles on the Advent Wreath are lit:

Our King and Savior now draws near: **Come let us adore him.**

After the candle(s) are lit a family member says this prayer:

Lord, Grant us your light, that being rid of the darkness of our hearts, we may come to the true light which is Christ. **Amen**

BRIEF ORDER FOR CONFESSION & FORGIVENESS

Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid: Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you and worthily magnify your holy name, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. But if we confess our sins, God who is faithful and just will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. (*1 John 1:8-9*)

Silence is kept for reflection.

Most merciful God.

we confess that we are in bondage to sin and cannot free ourselves. We have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done and by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. For the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us. Forgive us, renew us, and lead us, so that we may delight in your will and walk in your ways, to the glory of your holy name. Amen.

The minister addresses the congregation.

Almighty God, in his mercy, has given his Son to die for us and, for his sake, forgives us all our sins. As a called and ordained minister of the Church of Christ, and by his authority, I therefore declare to you the entire forgiveness of all your sins, in the name of the Father, and of the + Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Stir up your power, Lord Christ, and come. by your merciful protection alert us to the threatening dangers of our sins, and redeem us for your life of justice, for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

FIRST READING: Jeremiah 33:14-16 ((printed on the back cover)

In the Old Testament, “righteousness” often has to do with being faithful in relationship. God acts righteously both in punishing Israel for its sin and in having mercy. In today’s reading, Jerusalem’s future name— “The LORD is our righteousness” - proclaims that God is even now working salvation for Israel.

At the conclusion of the reading, the following is said:

The word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

PSALM: Psalm 25:1-10

¹To you, O LORD, I lift up my soul; my God, I put my ¹ trust in you;*
let me not be humiliated, nor let my enemies triumph ¹ over me.

²Let none who look to you be ¹ put to shame;*
let the treacherous be disappointed ¹ in their schemes.

³Show me your ¹ ways, O LORD,*
and teach ¹ me your paths.

⁴Lead me in your ¹ truth and teach me,*
for you are the God of my salvation; in you have I trusted all ¹ the day long.

⁵Remember, O LORD, your compas- ¹sion and love,*
**for they are from ¹ everlasting.
forgive my sin, for ¹ it is great.**

- ⁶Remember not the sins of my youth and ¹ my transgressions;*
**remember me according to your love and for the sake of your goodness,
O LORD.**
- ⁷Gracious and upright ¹ is the LORD;*
therefore he teaches sinners ¹ in his way.
- ⁸He guides the humble in ¹ doing right*
and teaches his way ¹ to the lowly.
- ⁹All the paths of the LORD are ¹ love and faithfulness*
to those who keep his covenant and his ¹ testimonies.
- ¹⁰For your name's ¹ sake, O LORD,*
forgive my sin, for ¹ it is great.

SECOND READING: 1 Thessalonians 3:9-13 (*printed on the back cover*)

Upon Timothy's report from the congregation at Thessalonica, Paul is exuberant with gratitude for them. In this passage from his letter, Paul voices overflowing thanks, joy, and blessing for the people of this growing church.

At the conclusion of the reading, the following is said:

The word of the Lord. Thanks be to God.

HOLY GOSPEL: Luke 21:25-36 (*printed on the back cover*)

God will fulfill God's purposes and, already, hidden signs of that fulfillment abound. On that great day there will be dismay, perplexity, confusion, and terror, but God's people shall be given strength to stand boldly and receive God's promised redemption.

The congregation stands; then the following is said:

The Holy Gospel according to Luke. Glory to you, O Lord.

At the conclusion of the Gospel, the following is said:

The Gospel of the Lord. Praise to you, O Christ.

Your Redemption is Drawing Near

“Look up! Raise your head! Your Redemption is drawing near.” (Luke 21:28)

Happy New Year! The Christian church around the world begins a new year with four Sundays known as Advent, which comes from the Latin and means “to come.” We are in the third year of a three year cycle, with the Gospel of Luke as our focus, as we continue to play whack-a-mole with the Gospel of John, showing up from time to time. So, “Happy New Year! Look up! Raise your head! Your Redemption is drawing near.”

So, if this is the beginning of the new church year and we are starting to mine the Gospel of Luke, why do we find ourselves this morning in the 21st chapter? Jesus is on his way to Jerusalem, to suffer and die on the cross, and has already predicted the destruction of the temple and the downfall of Jerusalem. This doesn’t sound like a very hopeful message to me, how about you? But, wait, our Redemption is drawing near. That’s the hopeful message Jesus had for his contemporaries, and it is the message that he has for us today.

It is a message filled with paradox in the Gospel of Luke. Jesus talks about “signs” that will prefigure the risen Jesus (21:25), juxtaposed with the “sign” that is the infant Jesus himself (2:21). We see “power and glory on the one hand (21:27), and humility and helplessness on the other (2:7). A warning that the “nations” will be “distressed” and “anxious” (21:26), set alongside a message of “good news of great joy for all the people” (2:10). The wisdom in these passages is palpable. Our spiritual lives are filled with paradox - both/and, instead of either/or.

The Gospel is full of paradox. In Luke, the infant Jesus is more than a baby born in a manger. He is also “a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.” Jesus says, “Whoever seeks to preserve her/his life will lose it, but whoever loses his/her life for my sake will keep it.” Jesus tells his disciples, “Do you think that I have come to give peace on earth? No, I tell you, but rather division.” Yet, when he shows up with the disciples in the upper room after his crucifixion and resurrection, he greets them with “Peace to you.” Jesus’ crucifixion led both to death and to new life. Jesus was both fully God and fully human.

Jesus tells the disciples in today’s gospel that destruction and death and betrayal are coming, but hope is there in the midst of it all. In the midst of wildfires and floods causing mudslides, in earthquakes and tornadoes, in violence within families,

communities and around the world, in the midst of all this suffering, Jesus says, “Look up! Raise your head! Your redemption is drawing near.”

Seeing images day after day and night after night on the TV or your smart phones can have a numbing effect on our ability to empathize with those who are suffering. We come each week to worship to break through the numbness. But breaking through the numbness is God’s job. Breaking through the spiritually anesthetized places in our hearts and souls requires resources beyond the best intentioned pastor, professor, counselor, spiritual director, or friend. In Luke’s Gospel, God is breaking through. God offers in Jesus a redemptive vision that is both social and spiritual. God is moving among humans in ways that reverse the ordering of the status quo. Jesus is inaugurating God’s work and restoring humanity and creation to God’s creative intent. Numbness is being pierced with every healing, every blessing, every time an outcast is caressed by God by way of Jesus’ touch.

So when we can’t feel the pain anymore, God shows up. We can’t do anything to make this happen. God shows up because God wills it to be so. God shows up where we often expect God the least. Our Sunday routine will not keep God out of the church today. Jesus declares that signs will be visible in the sun, moon, and stars. The nations will be distressed and confused by roaring seas and mighty waves. Someone is coming and the heavens will be shaken. “Look up! Raise your head! Your Redemption is drawing near!

What is at stake is not just another annual celebration or making Christmas memories with friends and family. What is at stake is the coming of the kingdom of heaven, which Jesus paradoxically reminds us is both already and not yet here.

Advent reminds us that there is an inescapable fact of life. Every life comes to an end, and the end of life lends urgency and significance to each new day. In the last four and one half years, I have presided over 26 life to life services, otherwise known as funerals, and I did not get this concept. In the untimely deaths of my 43 year old stepson, Kurt, and a 50 year old minister and dear friend, Aristides, who took their own lives, I did not get this concept. Now that my longest living friend of over 75 years, who had quadruple bypass heart surgery about two years ago, I am finally getting it. At 78 years of age, I get it, that those who know Christ as the Son of God can approach the end of life with heads raised high, knowing that their redemption is near.

What gives you direction when your home and community burn down? What gives you direction when innocent lives are suddenly snuffed out? What gives you

direction when you must leave your home, and sometimes your family because of persecution, oppression, and violence? We need to take seriously what Luke is telling us that we have the assurance in the worst of times that the Son of Man is close at hand, coming with power and great glory. This is the hopeful message that we take the season of Advent to proclaim. And how do we behave in these times? We pray! Look up! Raise your head! Your redemption is drawing near.” Amen.

NICENE CREED

We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty

Maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God,

**eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light,
 true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father.**

Through him all things were made.

**For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven;
 by the power of the Holy Spirit**

he became incarnate from the virgin Mary, and was made man.

**For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;
 he suffered death and was buried.**

**On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures;
 he ascended into heaven and**

is seated at the right hand of the Father.

**He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,
 and his kingdom will have no end.**

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,

who proceeds from the Father and the Son.

With the Father and The Son he is worshiped and glorified.

He has spoken through the prophets.

We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.

We acknowledge one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins.

**We look for the resurrection of the dead,
 and the life of the world to come. Amen**

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

In this season of watching and waiting, let us pray for all people and places that yearn for God’s presence.

A brief silence

God of presence and peace, strengthen your church around the globe to proclaim the message of your love coming to the world. Open our hearts to recognize your face in all people and in all of creation. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

God of mighty redwoods and microscopic plants, fields and city park, the wind and the waves, be a healing balm to our wounded planet. May we nurture what you have lovingly created. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

God of equity and compassion, bring righteousness and goodness to all peoples of the earth. Give a heart of discernment and integrity to leaders in our communities. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

God of comfort and care, be present with those who watch and wait. Come to all who await births, deaths, divorces, new unions, new jobs, retirements, healing, and life transitions of every kind. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

God of promises kept and new dreams awakened, shelter your people from destructive storms. We pray for those whose lives have been upended by natural disaster, for the work of Lutheran Disaster Response, Lutheran World Relief and other relief organizations. We also pray for Leigh Adams and family, Audrey Adams, Lynn Beard, Jacob Garman, Weston Hertzler, the family of Alma Hollingsworth, Amy Kenavan, Hunter Leisey, Lillian Logeman, James Martin, Judy Perry, Connie Right, Norma Rhoads, Lisa Riley, Ali and Kyle Roth, Vickie Salmi, Carol Stark, Gerald Styer, Evelyn Wissler, Doris Witwer, Wyatt

Wolfe. Be with Military personnel, First Responders, Healthcare workers and the helpers and the residents at nursing home, school administrators, staff, teachers and students in communities around this country. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

God of companionship and community, we give you thanks for the saints who journeyed with us and now abide in you. Even in distress and uncertainty, make us confident that your promises endure forever. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

God of new life, you come among us in the places we least expect. Receive these prayers and those of our hearts, in the name of Jesus.

Amen.

PEACE

The peace of the Lord be with you all.

And also with you, and to all who are present in worship, we share God's peace with you. (please remain in your pew for this greeting).

EUCARISTIC PRAYER

Assisting Minister: Send your Spirit of truth, O God; rekindle your gifts within us: renew our faith, increase our hope, and deepen our love, for the sake of a world in need. Faithful to your Word, O God, draw near to all who call on you; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit, be honor and glory forever. **Amen.**

THE WORDS OF INSTITUTION

The congregation responds with, **Amen.**

LORD'S PRAYER

**Our Father, who art in heaven,
 hallowed be thy name,
 thy kingdom come,
 thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.**

**Give us this day our daily bread;
 and forgive us our trespasses,
 as we forgive those who trespass against us;
 and lead us not into temptation
 but deliver us from evil.**

**For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory,
 forever and ever. Amen.**

FRACTION:

The table of life is spread before us. Receive the goodness and mercy of God. All are welcome at this table where Christ is the host and the meal.

COMMUNION

*The congregation is seated. Lutherans teach that Christ is truly present with, in, and under the bread and wine of Holy Communion. Those who wish to receive only a blessing should indicate this by crossing their arms over their chest. As the ministers distribute the elements, they say these words:
The body of Christ, given for you. The blood of Christ, shed for you. Each person may respond: Amen.*

POST-COMMUNION BLESSING

The Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen us and keep us in God's grace. **Amen**

POST-COMMUNION PRAYER

Assisting Minister: God for whom we wait, you come to us in the broken bread and the cup we share. Make us ready always to welcome Christ into our hearts, and send us forth to be your people in the world, announcing your coming among us in Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

BENEDICTION

The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord's face shine upon you and be gracious to you. The Lord look upon you with favor and give you peace. **Amen**

DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Prepare for the way of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

POSTLUDE: *Savior of the Nations, Come* — Paul Manz

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Music Notes:

Both the prelude and postlude are based on “Savior of the Nations, Come,” an Advent hymn found on page 263 of *Evangelical Lutheran Worship*. The original text is attributed to St. Ambrose (c. 340-397). Born into a Roman Christian family, Ambrose became a politician like his father and was appointed a governor in northern Italy at the age of 34. He was selected Bishop of Milan in 374 and came to be regarded as one of the most influential figures in the fourth-century Christian Church. Considered the father of Latin hymnody, St. Ambrose is credited with introducing hymnody and the practice of antiphonal singing from the Eastern Church into the West. Martin Luther’s German paraphrase of St. Ambrose’s original Latin hymn was translated into English in 1860 by William M. Reynolds, the son of a Revolutionary War captain.

ALTAR FLOWERS today are placed by D. Rene Amey in honor of her mother's birthday.

FELLOWSHIP AFTER CHURCH AND ADULT FORUM

Please join us for coffee, tea, etc. in the social hall sitting at socially distanced tables. We will begin an Advent study by Fr. Henri Nouwen.

CONGREGATIONAL MEETING - Sunday, December 5, 2021 following the worship service at 9 AM. This is the meeting to discuss the 2022 budget and to elect council members for the year 2022. There is also a need for the disciples in this congregation to discern how their gifts may be used as member of the Congregational Council. Please see Pastor if you feel called to this decision making body that is one of the opportunities to give "offerings that don't fit on the plate."

HANGING OF THE GREENS - December 5, 2021 following the congregational meeting.

IT'S THAT TIME OF YEAR AGAIN The ushers, Claude and Andy will be collecting on November 28th, December 5th, December 12th, and December 19th for the staff Christmas gift.

Jerusalem will again sponsor four families through the Lititz Warwick Community Chest! We will be collecting money through December 5th to purchase grocery store gift cards so the families can purchase food for their holiday meal. Thank you!

Lititz-Warwick Community Chest Food Bank

December Food Bank Suggestions:

- laundry detergent
- shampoo & conditioner
- liquid dish soap



ADVENT TREE- our Advent tree with ornaments to support the ELCA Good Gifts will adorn our narthex! Please choose a "gift" from the tree, let Larrie know which gift you chose and give him the amount shown on the ornament. Gifts can be purchased through 12/26. Catalogues are available with information and to help you chose a gift.

Order your Christmas Poinsettias to decorate

**the sanctuary for Christmas Eve. You may order red
or white each with at least 5 blooms.**

After the service, you are able to take your plants home.

**Please place completed order form and
money in offering plate by Sunday, December 12th**

See order form on reverse side.

IMPORTANT UPDATES Church office hours are: Tuesday 8 AM - 1 PM
Wednesday 8 AM - 1 PM Thursday 8 AM - 1 PM.

We have also changed our e-mail addresses. They are:

- jelc@ptd.net - Church Office
- jlcpastr@ptd.net - Pastor's office
- boplinger21@aol.com - Pastor's personal email

We extend our deepest sympathies to the family of Alma Hollingsworth on her passing from life to life on Tuesday, November 23, 2021.

IT'S THAT TIME OF YEAR AGAIN The ushers, Claude and Andy will be collecting on November 28th, December 5th, December 12th, and December 19th for the staff Christmas gift.

please print

Name: _____

Phone number: _____

_____ number of **white** 5+ blooms in 6 ½" pots x \$7.00 = \$ _____

_____ number of **red** blooms in 6 ½" pots x \$7.00 = \$ _____

Total: \$ _____

In honor of: _____

In memory of: _____

Orders and payment are due by 12/12/2021

SERVING IN THE LITURGY

Pastor.....The Rev. Bonnie Oplinger
Organist.....Roger Kurtz
Assisting Minister.....Jill Clubb
Lector.....Jill Clubb
Altar Guild.....
Ushers.....Andy Anderson & Claude Grube
Zoom WorshipJean Slaymaker
Acolyte.....Mel Ravegum

ZOOM WORSHIP - Here are the links for worship each Sunday moving forward. We will continue to print them in the bulletin and newsletter and they will also be available on the church's website @ www.jerusaluth.org.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/7157358191>

Call into worship by dialing this number (long-distance fees may apply):

+1 929 205 6099

Enter Meeting ID: 715 735 8191 (then press # twice)

Jerusalem Evangelical Lutheran Church

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Pastor's email: jlcparstr@ptd.net

The Reverend Bonnie M. Oplinger, Pastor

Mr. Roger L. Kurtz, Director of Music

Linda Messner, Office Administrator

Joan C. Dull, Sexton

Congregation, Ministers

FIRST READING: Jeremiah 33:14-16

The days are surely coming, says the LORD, when I will fulfill the promise I made to the house of Israel and the house of Judah.¹⁵ In those days and at that time I will cause a righteous Branch to spring up for David; and he shall execute justice and righteousness in the land.¹⁶ In those days Judah will be saved and Jerusalem will live in safety. And this is the name by which it will be called: "The LORD is our righteousness."

Psalm 25:1-10**SECOND READING:** 1 Thessalonians 3:9-13

How can we thank God enough for you in return for all the joy that we feel before our God because of you?¹⁰ Night and day we pray most earnestly that we may see you face to face and restore whatever is lacking in your faith.

¹¹ Now may our God and Father himself and our Lord Jesus direct our way to you.¹² And may the Lord make you increase and abound in love for one another and for all, just as we abound in love for you.¹³ And may he so strengthen your hearts in holiness that you may be blameless before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all his saints.

GOSPEL: Luke 21:25-36

[Jesus said:] "There will be signs in the sun, the moon, and the stars, and on the earth distress among nations confused by the roaring of the sea and the waves.²⁶ People will faint from fear and foreboding of what is coming upon the world, for the powers of the heavens will be shaken.²⁷ Then they will see 'the Son of Man coming in a cloud' with power and great glory.²⁸ Now when these things begin to take place, stand up and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near."

²⁹ Then he told them a parable: "Look at the fig tree and all the trees;³⁰ as soon as they sprout leaves you can see for yourselves and know that summer is already near.³¹ So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that the kingdom of God is near.³² Truly I tell you, this generation will not pass away until all things have taken place.³³ Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.

³⁴ "Be on guard so that your hearts are not weighed down with dissipation and drunkenness and the worries of this life, and that day does not catch you unexpectedly,³⁵ like a trap. For it will come upon all who live on the face of the whole earth.³⁶ Be alert at all times, praying that you may have the strength to escape all these things that will take place, and to stand before the Son of Man."